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Contact: Scott Powers, 406-896-5319

Energy Corridors Subject of Public Meeting

Public meetings focused on designation of rights-of-way on federal land to improve energy transmission across 11 western states will be held in Helena on Thursday, October 27, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The meetings will be at the Holiday Inn, 22 N. Last Chance Gulch, in Helena.

The Energy Act Policy of 2005 requires that federal agencies work together to designate corridors on federal land for oil, natural gas and hydrogen pipelines and electricity transmission and distribution facilities.

The Department of Energy will lead the process, with the Bureau of Land Management as the co-lead. The U.S. Forest Service is a cooperating agency in the effort, which will culminate in preparation of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). Argonne National Laboratory will provide technical assistance to the agencies.

“Corridor designation represents a major federal action that may have significant environmental impact under the National Environmental Policy Act,” said Howard Lemm, acting director for BLM in Montana. “An interagency PEIS will be completed before corridors are designated, so that the states, public and other interested parties may have the opportunity to be involved in scoping and planning for this process.”

After the PEIS is completed, affected land management plans will be amended as necessary. The Energy Policy Act requires that necessary updates to plans be completed by August 8, 2007.

The Helena gathering is one of 11 public scoping meetings being held in the West.

More information about the corridor designation project is available online at <http://corridoreis.anl.gov> The website also show how to submit comments electronically and subscribe to an e-mail list for updates.

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